DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 174 608 SP 014 540

AUTHOR Miller, Lynne
TITLE Staff Development for University Personnel: A Field Based Instructor's Perspective.
NOTE 10p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Faculty; *College High School Cooperation; Higher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; Interaction; *Interinstitutional Cooperation; *Program Coordination; Role Conflict; Teacher Improvement

ABSTRACT

A description is given of the responsibilities of a college professor based in a public high school serving as director of inservice teacher education in cooperation with the university that grants credits for courses offered in the program. Some of the problems involved in forging an alliance between the school and the university are discussed. A common problem is one of handling the logistics of different calendars for the two institutions and in enlisting help from other college faculty at times that may not suit the convenience of any of the program participants. Differing attitudes toward priorities on the part of the participants also presents a problem for the liaison officer: university faculty are inclined toward theoretical thought and are interested in research and publication; high school faculty are oriented toward problem solving and practical solutions to immediate situations. Some possible solutions for these problems are offered. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED174608

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL: A FIELD BASED INSTRUCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Lynne Miller, Program Development Specialist
University of Massachusetts/Worcester

For the past 2½ years, I have worked as a "field based instructor" at the University of Massachusetts/Worcester Teacher Corps project. As such, I hold a university position as assistant professor and meet the requirements of teaching, research, and service through almost daily involvement in a public secondary school. I have, in effect, taken the role of a "clinical professor", bridging the gap between the world of the university and the world of the public school. In this article, I will discuss (1) the role of the "clinical" or "field based instructor", (2) the problems that emerge in forging a university/school alliance for staff development, and (3) possible directions for universities to take in resolving these problems.

Description of the "Clinical" Role

As a field based instructor, I coordinate on-site all formal and informal learning experiences for the teaching staff at South High School in Worcester. All courses and workshops that Teacher Corps offers are given on site, all instruction and supervision is done within the parameters of the school calendar and the school building. I teach two courses a semester as part of my university teaching load. I coordinate the teaching of other university faculty, who travel to Worcester to teach once a week, as part of their teaching load. All teachers taking our courses are enrolled as either non-degree or degree students at the University.

SP 014540

It is my responsibility to "broker" between the university faculty and the school staff to make a good match between the needs of the school staff and the competencies of the university faculty. When university faculty cannot be found with the competencies that teachers desire, I recruit people from the community and local social service agencies as instructors who teach under my supervision. This last aspect is a sensitive one, to say the least.

In addition to formal course work, I visit teachers in their classes upon invitation. I work with individual teachers in reorganizing their classes for learning in improving specific teaching behaviors, or in inventing new forms for effective teaching and learning. I place emphasis on working with groups of teachers who collaborate on the design and implementation of new programs for students. We meet together during the school day, during their "preparation" period, and after school.

I am responsible for the development and administration of the school based graduate degree program. Teachers may work toward the MED and the CAGS. As director of the degree program, my responsibilities include program design, student advisement, monitoring of academic courses, evaluation of student progress, and making recommendations to the graduate school about the awarding of degrees. In carrying out these responsibilities, I have developed a degree program which is based on the documentation of the applications of theory into practice as well as the accumulation of course credits.

I work very closely with the Worcester Office of Staff Development. All courses offered through Teacher Corps are approved through that office for "equivalency credit" applicable for pay increments. I have assisted in city wide staff development efforts and have developed collegial relationships with other system wide staff developers, including curriculum coordinators and directors.

Additionally, I serve as a liaison between the university and schools. At the university, I work with other teacher educators who are developing site based staff development programs. I am consultant to two of these site based programs on a regular basis. I use the information and perspectives I have acquired in the schools to influence university policy towards staff development in particular and professional extension programs in general. I meet regularly with the Deans and other university administrators to present my views. I advise university based doctoral students, serve on doctoral committees and serve some school wide committees relevant to the work I do in the field.

The liaison work takes time, but more importantly, it requires a sensitivity to two very different social systems; that of the university and that of the public schools. In my role as liaison, I must live comfortably and work effectively in both worlds.

Lastly, I use the school based work of the project as the source for my professional research and writing in order to meet the university requirements of publication and research.

The role I have described here is at once varied, demanding, dynamic, and complex. It is significantly different from the role of the traditional university faculty. This role has provided me with the opportunity to experience the development of a university/school relationship. In the following section, some of the problems inherent in this relationship are discussed.

Problems in a University/School Alliance

The problems in forging a university/school alliance for staff development fall into two categories: bureaucratic/pragmatic and professional/institutional. The first category of problems are easily identified and just as easily remedied. For instance, the calendars of the university and the

public school are not coordinated. University registration usually ends before public schools open in the fall. Holidays vary; universities take vacations for almost five weeks in January; schools take ten days between Christmas and New Years. Universities end the semester in early May; schools in late June. The result of this seemingly simple difference is intense resentment on the part of school people toward the university. Not only are the university procedures inconvenient, but the professors "have it easy", "aren't there when you need them", etc.

As the clinical professor, the calendar differences make it impossible to find any relief from the pressures. Responsible to both institutions, living in both worlds, she has to be there when work is in progress in each institution. Add to this the usual summer instruction time for teachers, the "clinical" professor is often left with two weeks uncommitted at the end of August . . . hardly ready to return in early September when things begin anew. This results in one of the problems of clinical professors, faculty "burn-out."

Beyond the bureaucratic/pragmatic differences between the two institutions are the differences which are more embedded in the nature of the professions and the institution. The university professor has a very different professional orientation than the public school teacher. The professoriate is oriented toward the production of knowledge and less toward problem solving. The school teacher wants immediate answers to the problems she faces daily. The professoriate values research and is rewarded for it. The school teacher is impatient with theory which is not applicable to the present demands of the job. In fact, from the teacher's view, research is irrelevant. The college professor is used to a high degree of autonomy in her professional life. She comes and goes as she pleases, aside from

scheduled classes, having almost complete authority over her advising and office hours. Teachers are bound more by structure, time and convention. They must teach from an approved curriculum, adhere to fixed bell schedules, and account for all of their time while on the job. Teachers and professors inhabit different worlds and it is difficult to get beyond those differences to find a common ground for discussion and exchange.

If these worlds are transcended and the clinical professor can enter into meaningful interaction with teachers, then the professor - if she is to do her job well as a field based instructor - must violate some of the norms of the university. For instance, the reward structure of the university works against the "clinical" instructor. A professor is rewarded for teaching, research, and service. It is extremely difficult when in the field to engage in these functions simultaneously. Additionally, it is next to impossible to engage in the informal values required for university promotion; the values of visibility, collegiality, and proximity. The field based instructor earns none of these "points" toward tenure and promotion and is often accused of being "off campus too much", "inaccessible to students", etc. The field based instructor is in a double bind. She has proved effective in bridging the two worlds of the university and the public school, and in so doing, is no longer rewarded through the informal system of the university. Having provided a link between the university and the school, she can no longer meet the expectations of the university. Such a situation makes the clinical professorship a less attractive option for young professors who hope to rise within the university.

An important distinction between universities and public schools, as I have said earlier, lies in what each values and encourages. Universities with their concern for knowledge production, make knowledge utilization a

secondary concern. The opposite is that of public schools. The result is that universities do not encourage the work of the kinds of people that public schools need in their staff development efforts. Many of the people who work in the universities do not have the practical skills and competencies that school teachers value and need to improve in their work. In fact, many of the people best equipped to train teachers in practical skills are not in the university at all. They are in private consulting agencies, in technical assistance agencies, or in the schools themselves as teachers. Universities are finding themselves in the sad state of not being able to provide the service to schools that schools assume we can provide.

Along with the competencies issue emerges the issue of the professor's style and the appropriateness of that style in public schools. Over time, university faculties have developed styles of teaching which are appropriate for the university lecture or seminar room, but which do not make sense in the world of the public school. Teachers expect their teachers to be using the techniques of individualizing, small group instruction, competency based education, experiential education, etc., as they teach about them. "Don't tell me, show me" has become the motto of the teacher who is suspect of someone from the university whose mission is to "develop" her. Universities value professors who produce knowledge rather than ones skilled in pedagogy and teachers are demanding a new pedagogy.

The problems raised here are problems of values, norms, rewards, competencies, usefulness, and appropriateness. They are not problems that are unique to work in one school. They are general problems that must be faced and resolved by universities which hope to engage in staff development work in schools.

Directions for Universities

There are several directions that university faculties might take in solving the problems outlined above. On the bureaucratic/pragmatic level, the university calendar can be made more flexible and registration dates can be extended for public school teachers. University people and teachers should be clear about expectations and should be aware of the time constraints under which each group is working. For example, university faculty should be sure to tell school people when they will be available for work in schools and when they are inaccessible. Such planning will decrease antagonism between the two groups.

The problem of "burn out" can be addressed through a policy of rotating clinical professorships. For example, a professor would take one full semester on campus for every three semesters in the field. Such an arrangement would insure that those university faculty in the field bring with them a freshness and vitality that would make their work productive. It would also provide time for the field oriented professor to reflect on the field experience and write for publication on the work. The semester on campus also makes it possible for the clinician to maintain close contact with colleagues on campus and to involve herself in the informal reward system of the university. It would also provide the essential reality base for formal instruction on campus.

The rewards for field based teaching, research, and service are important. University faculties need to create new kinds of positions with new standards or criteria for the rewards which reflect the work functions of clinical professors. Such a professorship would be a tenure track position and would be evaluated through a field based evaluation which differs significantly from the procedures used for on campus faculty slots. The role of

the "clinical" or "field based" professor would be clearly defined and written as a formal contract. The contract would become the basis for review of reappointment, promotion, and tenure. The creation and maintenance of such a faculty position would be the full responsibility of the highest academic officer of the appropriate school or department in the university. It would be expected that the academic officer would support and "fight for" such a position within the university structure.

The issues of faculty competence and appropriate teaching behaviors in carrying out the mission of staff development are the most difficult to address. The creation of the clinical professorship speaks to these problems, but it also highlights the conflict between good theoreticians and good practitioners. Ideally, good theory leads to good practice, but practically the division is real and not easily overcome. While some people advocate a massive re-training of university faculties, I do not support such a view. Instead, I invision new partnerships among universities, state department of education, private consultants, professional associations, and public school teachers. These partnerships would compliment each other, each providing the kinds of services that it does best, each recognizing the areas in which it lacks expertise and each calling on the other in creative ways.

As a last point, the universities could provide expertise in doing what they do best: the production of knowledge. The kind of knowledge production needed though is not more positivist research which depends on a highly structured experimental design in which hypotheses are proved or disproved in laboratory like settings. Rather, the need is to develop research methodologies which <u>build theory</u> which are grounded in the social realities of shcools, which examines the dailiness of school organization and the processes of change in

schools. Such research is hermeneutical; it makes interpretations about the world, based on the activities of people in the world. Such re-directions in research would engage the universities in work which could ultimately help practitioners, which may erase the line between theory and practice and make university work more relevant to the school.

I am convinced there is a role for university faculties in staff development activities in public schools. I have argued that universities, as they are now structured, are not apt to meet the needs of teachers in schools, that new kinds of faculty positions have to be created, that new procedures for faculty appointment must be initiated, that new contracts for faculty performance must be written. I have further argued that universities are not equipped by themselves to carry out the mandate of staff development, that they must engage other organizations and agencies in a partnership to carry out the development task. And finally, I have argued that universities should re-direct their research energies and concentrate in developing more "ground theory" about schools and teaching.